Did You Know?
Harmful Interactions– Mixing Alcohol with Medicines

JAN 15

481-5998

You've probably seen this warning on medicines you've taken. The danger is real. Mixing alcohol with certain medications can cause nausea and vomiting, headaches, drowsiness, fainting, or loss of coordination. It also can put you at risk for internal bleeding, heart problems, and difficulties in breathing. In addition to these dangers, alcohol can make a medication less effective or even useless, or it may make the medication harmful or toxic to your body.

Mixing alcohol and medicines can be harmful. Alcohol, like some medicines, can make you sleepy, drowsy, or lightheaded. Drinking alcohol while taking medicines can intensify these effects. You may have trouble concentrating or performing mechanical skills. Small amounts of alcohol can make it dangerous to drive, and when you mix alcohol with certain medicines you put yourself at even greater risk. Combining alcohol with some medicines can lead to falls and serious injuries.

Drugs and interactions with Alcohol

Antidepressants: could cause a dangerous spike in blood pressure, leading to a stroke

Cocaine: Potentially very dangerous because alcohol also elevates blood pressure, increasing risk for heart attack and stroke

Sedatives & Tranquilizers: Severe drowsiness, depressed cardiac and pulmonary functions that can be fatal

Opiates: Enhances sedative effect of both, increasing the risk of overdose

Antibiotics: Most antibiotics are less effective when taken with alcohol, may exacerbate nausea

Aspirin & Ibuprofen: Increases the risk for gastrointestinal bleeding

Antihistamines: Severe drowsiness

Antidiabetic/Hypoglycemic: People taking these medications should avoid alcohol at all times

Although most drugs are safe and effective when used as directed, it's important to read warning labels on all medications. If you're not sure if a medication can be combined with alcohol, avoid any alcohol consumption until your doctor or pharmacist has told you that it's safe to mix the two

Source of Information: NIAAA